

*Eldridge
Popular Plays*

*Christmas
At Finnegan's Flat*

*By
Seymour S. Tibbals*

Price 25 Cents

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Entertainment House
Franklin, Ohio.
Denver, Colo.*

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Eldridge Entertainment House

FRANKLIN, OHIO

also

DENVER, COLO.
944 S. Logan St.

CHRISTMAS AT FINNEGAN'S FLAT.

A CHRISTMAS COMEDY

By SEYMOUR S. TIBBALS.

Author of "The Little Politician," "Christmas at Golden Gulch,"
"The Millionaire Janitor," etc., etc.

FIFTH EDITION.

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ELDRIDGE ENTERTAINMENT HOUSE,
FRANKLIN, - OHIO.

CHARACTERS

Patrick Finnegan, owner of the flat.

Prof. Baton, a violinist.

Dan Dooley, the policeman.

John, a chauffeur.

Little Tom, the pet of the flat.

Biddy Finnegan, Pat's wife.

Miss Neversmile, a lodger.

Mary, little Tom's sister.

Miss Goodheart, Santa Claus' agent.

A dozen children who live in Finnegan's flat

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. Pat's kitchen. The Christmas spirit.

ACT II. The same. The Christmas celebration.

Christmas at Finnegan's Flat.

ACT I.

Scene—A kitchen, or plain chamber, poorly furnished. At rise of curtain children's chorus is heard outside singing a Christmas song. Any lively Christmas song may be used. Finnegan is seated before stove, with head bowed, listening. At conclusion of song he looks up.

Finn. Begorra, the babbies are merry tonight. Bless their dear little hearts! And not a wan of them will get a blessed prisent tomorry. Shure its a shame. (*Rises.*) I wonder if it would be possible to do somethin' to make them have a merry Christmas? It wouldn't take much. (*Takes a few coins from his pocket and throws them on the table.*) Five, tin, twinty, twinty-five, thurty. Looks like thurty cents. It'll buy thurty-six sticks of candy at tin cents the dozen. Begorra I'll do it.

Biddy. (*Enters from R. carrying a few old dishes.*) Here! Patrick Finnegan. Where are ye going?

Finn. Hist, darlint, I am just goin' down to Herman Schmaltz to get a little surprise.

Biddy. (*Advances toward him.*) Ye are goin' to do nothin' of the kind, Mister Patrick Finnegan. 'Tis Christmas Eve and ye'll stay at home this night wid yer wife.

Finn. Oh, Biddy, darlint. Now don't interfere with me noble intintions.

Biddy. I know yer noble intintions, alright, alright. I've lived with them fer twinty years and I know phat goin' out on Christmas Eve means.

Finn. Shure, Biddy, ye don't understand at all, at all. To-night I'm filled with the Christmas spirit.

Biddy (*Drops dishes.*) Phat! Christmas spirit,

is it? And ye promised me a year ago ye would niver touch another drop.

Finn. And I've kept my word. It's been the happiest and best year of our lives, darlint, and I mean to let drinkin' alone all the rest of me days.

Biddy. Forgive me, Pat, but ye scared me. Tell me thin what is this Christmas spirit that ye are full of?

Another verse outside.

Finn. Hist! Do ye hear the babbies singing?

Biddy. Shure I do.

Finn. Well, it's the desire to give them a real sure-enough Christmas that fills me heart this night.

Biddy. A foine impulse it is, Pat.

Finn. Impulse, nothin.' It's a determination. Now who are those children?

Biddy. Shure they're the babbies of Finnegan's flats.

Finn. Right you are. And phat is Finnegan's flats.

Biddy. The most orderly tenement house in all the East Side.

Finn. Right ye are again. And the people that live in it are poor but honest parents as the story books say.

Biddy. That most of thim is honest I do believe. That all of thim is poor I kin solemnly swear.

Finn. Well?

Biddy. Well?

Finn. You've guessed it.

Biddy. Guessed what?

Finn. The riddle. The deep-laid plot.

Biddy. Sure I've guessed it. But I don't know what yer talkin' about.

Finn. We are goin' to have Christmas at Finnegan's Flats tomorrow.

Biddy. (Surprised) Pat!

Finn. (*Jumping away.*) Phat? Don't scare the wits out of me.

Biddy. Are ye crazy? How can ye have Christmas without money? Taxes will be due this week and every family in the flat is behind with the rint.

Finn. Mrs. Finnegan, ma'am, I beg to inform ye that we will have Christmas at Finnegan's Flats tomorrow, taxes or no taxes, rint or no rint.

Biddy. Ye talk like an insane person or a millionaire. Where will ye git the money to have Christmas?

Finn. Shure I have it here in me pocket.

Biddy. How much?

Finn. Thurty cents. And I was just about to go out and invest it in thurty-six sticks of peppermint candy when ye told me to halt and I halted.

(*Prof. Baton peeps in at the door.*)

Baton. Vat is all de row about?

Finn. (*Goes to the door and drags him forward mysteriously.*) Hist. Don't say a word. A conspiracy!

Baton. Nine. Not for me. I vas in a conspiracy vonce and for dat I left de old country.

Biddy. Shure this is a different kind of a conspiracy. This is a Christmas conspiracy.

Baton. Dot moxs nix oud. Christmas or Labor day or de Fort of July. Dis all de same. First comes de conspiracy, den comes de police.

Finn. You're foolish.

Baton. Ya, I know me dot, or I wouldn't be livin' in Finnegan's Flat.

Biddy. Faith an' ye might have a worse home, Professor Baton.

Baton. Ya, das is so, De poet said, "Be it ever so tumbled ders no place like home." Vat is dis Christmas doings you speak about?

(*Children sing another verse outside.*)

Finn. Do yees hear those children singing?

Baton. Vell I guess I do. I am not deaf yet.

Biddy. Pat is goin' to give the little ones a Christmas party.

Baton. Vell dot is a laudenum anticipations.

Biddy. You mean a laudable ambition.

Baton. Yas. Vat ever it is, it is.

Finn. Will you help us?

Baton. Shure, vat is de indication fee?

Finn. Oh, talk United States. Phat is de phat?

Baton. De indication fee, de assessment, de so much down.

Biddy. Sure it's a free-will offering.

Baton. Oh yas, cerdainly. I vill freely contributions the loan of my fiddle.

Finn. That's not enough. We need money to purchase the confectionary and fruits and nuts and pop corn and—

Baton. Hold on!

Biddy. Phats de matter now?

Baton. From the limitations of mine unbounded wealth, from de fullness of my sympathetic heart I vill gif—I vill gif—

Finn and Biddy. Phat?

Baton. De string on which to string de pop corn.

Finn. Professor Baton I am ashamed of you. What would the world say? Prof. Baton, the eminent violin virtu—virtuo—virtuoso (*coughs*). Begorra, I nearly choked on thot virtu—virtuo—virtuoso, gave the beneficent gift of the string, ladies and gentlemen, upon which to string the popcorn.

Baton. Oh vell, if you feel dot vay aboutt it I vill also give de pop corn through which to string de string.

Biddy. Ah, he has been touched by the Christmas spirit. Henceforth we shall call you Benevolent Baton, the popcorn man.

Baton. (*excitedly*). No. No. You shall not

call me the pop corn man. I am a musician. I vill gif vat you say.

Biddy. Ah, then your indication fee, your assessment, your so much down shall be one dollar, Prof. Baton.

Baton. (*tosses dollar on table*). It is not de Christmas spirit, it is de Christmas graft. But I gif it rather than to be called the pop corn man.

Finn. I thank you, noble benefactor.

Baton. Noble fiddlesticks. Ven is dis blow out to be?

Biddy. Tomorrow, on the blessed Christmas day.

Baton. Until tomorrow den, fair dame, farewell. I'll to me humble couch and sleep awhile. Fare thee well. (*exits, bowing*).

(*Children sing another verse outside.*)

Finn. Ah, Biddy, me darlint, the sum for the Christmas celebration at Finnegan's Flat has reached the sum of one dollar and thurty cints.

Biddy. It is almost time for Miss Neversmile to be getting home. I'll make her give something.

Finn. Shure I wouldn't ask her at all, at all. Ye know she don't like children and ye know she don't believe in Christmas.

Biddy. Fer shame, Patrick Finnegan, the poor sowl works so hard all day in the restaurant that she is dead tired whin noight comes and thin she niver had no little children to love her and to love.

Finn. Thot's so. And she niver had no husband—

Biddy. An' fer thot she ought to be thankful. Hush, here she comes now.

(*Enter Miss Neversmile through door.*)

Miss N. Good evenin', Mrs. Finnegan.

Biddy. A merry Christmas to you, Miss Neversmile.

Miss N. Don't wish me a merry Christmas, Mrs. Finnegan. I never had a merry Christmas in all my life. Never believed in Christmas nohow. All foolishness, waste of money and tomfoolery. You get a lot of jim cracks from a lot of people you don't care anything about and have to give every blessed one of them something in return. Christmas is a great fraud.

Finn. Shure Chrismas wasn't made for grown-up folks, Miss Neversmile.

Miss N. No, nor for anybody else that I could ever see.

Biddy. Oh, yes it was. It was made for children.

Miss N. Made to spoil 'em then. Given' them a lot of rubbish to play with and fillin' their stomachs with cheap candy and stale nuts. There's only one worse holiday in this country and that's the Fourth of July, when they drive you distracted with noise and blow out their eyes with gun powder. Of all the idiotic customs I think—

Finn. Howld on there. We're not talkin' about the Fourth of July. The question before the house is shall we or shall we not have a merry Christmas at Finnegan's Flat?

Miss N. If you want me to keep my apartments in your miserable shanty we'll have a *respectable* Christmas and that's the same as a sane Fourth of July. No presents, no noise, no cheap candy and no indigestion.

Finn. Well, of all the grouchy, sour old maids—

Miss N. Mr. Finnegan, have a care, sir.

Biddy. Aisy now, Pat. Don't be rude. Remember Miss Neversmile is a lady.

Finn. No lady would express such opinions of children and Christmas.

Miss N. You seem to be in a very bad humor to-night, Mr. Finnegan. If you think so much of this Christmas festival you ought to show more of that

Christmas spirit that breathes "peace on earth, good will to men."

Finn. I've got the good will to men alright, but I don't think there iver could be any peace anywhere on earth with you around.

(Enter Mary Bright through door)

Biddy. Hello, Mary, me darlint. Was that you singin' with the children awhile ago?

Mary. Yes, Mrs. Finnegan. Didn't they sing just beautiful?

Finn. Shure they did, Mary. It sounded mighty foine.

Miss N. I hope they've gone to bed. I don't think children ought to be allowed to sing at night in a big house like this. It disturbs people that work hard all day and need their rest—

Mary. I'm sorry, Miss Neversmile, if the boys and girls disturb you. But this is Christmas eve, you know. And by the way, Mrs. Finnegan, I brought you this big red apple for a Christmas gift. A kind old gentleman gave it to me on the street this evening and I thought right away what a nice Christmas present it would make for Mrs. Finnegan. *(offers apple.)*

Biddy. Bless your dear, ginerous little heart. But I couldn't think of taking it, Mary. It was meant for you and you must kape it.

Mary. Why, that wouldn't give me any pleasure, Mrs. Finnegan. The Good Book says it is more blessed to give than to receive, so you see after all I am selfish in wanting you to take it.

Miss N. Well, I never heard of such a thing in all my life. I've knocked around this world for a number of years and I never met any one yet who got more pleasure out of givin' than they did out of takin'.

Mary. Indeed it is true, Miss Neversmile. If you want to know the real joy of living just make

somebody happy and see how much pleasure it gives you.

Finn. Shure she talks like an old-fashioned missionary. Ye have a great deal of sense for such a young head my lass.

Mary. I've taken care of my little brother ever since mother died, Mr. Finnegan, and it takes sense to mind a healthy little fellow like Tom.

Biddy. Spakin' of Tom that reminds me, Mary. Pat and I was plannin' a little Christmas party for all the youngsters in the flat tomorrow and we want you to help us.

Mary. Oh, how jolly! Indeed I'll help you. What can I do?

Finn. Ye can do a great deal. As soon as you can, come here in the mornin' and help Mrs. Finnegan fix up the room. I am goin' to get a Christmas tree and we are going to have candy and nuts.

Miss N. How are you going to get all those things, Mr. Finnegan? I suppose you are aware that Christmas trees and candy and nuts and all such rubbish cost money.

Biddy. Pat will take an ax and chop a tree fer nothin'. He has a few pennies fer the candy and Prof. Baton has given a dollar toward the fund.

Mary. Dear old Professor. He is always so kind.

Miss N. Humph. I don't see the use of it but I'll give fifty cents myself. Here. (*hands Mary coin.*)

Finn. Ah thot's the Christmas spirit workin' in ye. Somehow ye just can't help it when ye catch the Christmas spirit.

Mary. Oh, thank you, Miss Neversmile. And you must help us fix the room.

Miss N. I have another idea.

Biddy. Good fer ye. Howld tight to it and let us hear it.

Miss N. Miss Goodheart, the secretary of the

Associated Charities is a friend of mine and I think I might get her to make us a donation from her stock of cast off clothing.

Finn. Aisy there. This is to be Christmas at Finnegan's flat and we're not askin' for charity.

Miss N. Oh well, if you object, Mr. Finnegan.

Biddy. Kape still, Pat. Shure it isn't charity to accept prisints on Christmas.

Mary. And some of the little ones need warm coats and shoes so badly.

Miss N. That's it. And there are great piles of warm clothing being given to people less worthy.

Finn. Objection overruled. I stand corrected. *(takes up ax.)*

Miss N. I'll see Miss Goodheart in the morning and get what I can from her. Goodnight. *(starts toward the door.)*

Mary. And a merry Christmas.

Miss N. Well, we'll see. *(exit.)*

Finn. And I'll go chop the tree tonight when nobody's lookin'. *(exit.)*

Biddy. I'll run down to Mr. Schmaltz's grocery and see if he won't give us a few ears of pop-corn. *(throws shawl over head and exits.)*

Mary. *(Sitting in rocking chair, center of stage.)* Oh, won't it be jolly. How dear of Pat and Biddy to think of it. And how much fun the children will have.

(Enter Tom dressed in night clothes.)

Tom. Mary, where are you?

Mary. Here I am, dear. Why what are you doing out of bed? I thought you were asleep.

Tom. I woked up. *(climbing up in her lap.)* And I got so scared thinkin' 'bout Santa Claus.

Mary. Why Santa Claus wouldn't hurt you, darling. He loves good little boys.

Tom. He never comed to see me yet.

Mary. But he is coming, dear, tomorrow. Coming here to Finnegan's flats to see you and all the little boys and girls.

Tom. Honest truth, Mary?

Mary. Honest truth, Tom. Now be a good little fellow and I'll rock you to sleep. *(Huddles him to her breast and sings a Christmas lullaby. He nestles down and goes to sleep as she sings. At end of song curtain falls.)*

ACT II.

(The same scene as in Act 1 except that a Christmas tree is placed a little back of the center. The tree should not be an evergreen but a small bare shrub. A few pieces of ordinary tallow candles should be placed on the limbs. Several strings of pop-corn are festooned about the tree, a few ornaments made by covering walnuts and pieces of corncobs with tin foil are hung on the tree; also half a dozen sticks of peppermint candy. Do not overdo the decorations on the tree and do not have any other decorations about the stage. At rise of curtain a dozen or more children poorly dressed are standing about the tree with Finnegan and Biddy, Prof. Baton, Mary and little Tom in the group.)

Children. *(All speaking together and clapping hands.)* It's just beautiful. Ain't it grand! Oh, Merry Christmas everybody. *(Then all join hands, including adults, and dance in a circle about the tree, shouting,)* "Merry Christmas to all."

Finn. *(breaking away from circle.)* Here, here, stop that now. Do you want to wear the old man out? *(They all gather around him.)*

Mary. Oh, Mr. Finnegan, it was so kind of you to give the children this party. See how happy they are.

Finn. Tut, tut. Shure Oi'm hevin' more fun out of it myself than the babbies are.

Baton. Off you vill permid me I would make a suggestion already.

Biddy. (*clapping her hands*). Order, order, children, Prof. Baton has the floor.

Baton. Von moment, off you please. Whereas the Honorable and kindhearted Mr. Patrick Finnegan has disarranged the program for dis magnificent celebrations be it resolved dat he be permitted to make a fine speech to which we must all listen. I dank you. (*bows low.*)

All. Yes, yes, Speech by Mr. Finnegan.

Finn. Aw quit yer foolin'. (*much embarrassed.*)

Biddy. (*Pushing him forward*) Go on now, Pat. Make a fine speech.

Finn. (*aside*) I never made a speech in all my loife.

Biddy. It's for the children. Go on.

Finn. Shure wise men say they're the hardest to talk to.

All. Speech! Mr. Finnegan, speech.

Finn. (*Advances to center and bows. Is much embarrassed and twists bandana handkerchief through his fingers.*) Ladies and gentlemen and little children. Oi assure yez thot Oi am deeply touched by this very gr-reat honor which you have conferred upon me in axin' me to spake to you upon this occasion.

Baton. Good, good! (*All applaud.*)

Finn. As Oi was sayin' Oi am deeply touched—deeply touched—by this very gr-reat honor which you have conferred upon me—

Biddy. (*Pulling his coat.*) Ye sed thot once, Pat.

Finn. Shure Oi'll say it as often as I loike. (*Resuming.*) Oi am deeply conferred by this spache which you have touched me to know you with upon this occasion. Oi would be very glad to make you a foine speech but fer one thing.

Baton. Vat is dot?

Finn. Oi can't think of a blessed thing to say.
(*All applaud loudly as Finnegan retreats.*)

(*Loud knock on door.*)

Dan. (*outside*) Hear, hear, what's all this noise about? (*Enter Dooley dressed as a policeman.*)

Biddy. A merry Christmas to yez, Mr. Dooley.

Dan. Well, may the Saints preserve me. If it aint a Christmas party sure enough.

Baton. Sure. We haf all got de Christmas spirit und it is just lofley. Efrey leedle bit helps und you must sing a song, dance a jig, tell a funny story or chip in a dollar to buy peanuts and pop-corn.

Dan. I'll chip in the dollar right willingly. Here you are Mrs. Finnegan. (*Tosses her a dollar.*) And I'll tell you a story but it ain't very funny.

All. Mr. Dooley is going to tell a story. (*All sit on floor and chairs about the room.*)

Dan. This is a little story about something that happened to me four years ago on Christmas Eve. You know my beat is along the river front one of the worst districts in the city. For a long time I had been trying to catch a band of river thieves whose leader was a big, lame fellow named Jim. I told the story once to a lady who writes for the newspapers and she made up a little poem about it.

Recites.

On Christmas eve I had at last run down

Lame Jim, the captain of a river gang,

Who had never been caught, although his deeds
Were such that he deserved for them to hang.

And as he sprang up the dock I sprung

Like lightning after him, and in a trice

Fell through a trap door, and went sliding down
Upon a plank as slippery as ice.

I drew my pistol as I slid, and when

I struck the earth again, "Hands up!" I cried;

"I've got you now," and at the same time flashed
The light of a dark lantern every side.

I'd landed in a big square room, but no
Lame Jim nor any other rough was there;
But from some blankets spread upon the floor
A child looked up at me with wandering stare—

A little girl with eyes that shone like stars,
And sweet pale face, and curly golden head
"Why did you come so fast? You woke me up,
And scared me, too," in lisping words she said.

"But now I am not scared, for I know you,
You're Santa Claus. My stocking's on the wall.
I wish you a merry Christmas. Where's my toys?
I hope you've brought some candy and a ball."

I never was so taken 'back, I vow;
And while I speechless stood, Jim got away.
"Who are you, little one?" at last I asked.
"Why, don't you know?" she said. "I'm little
May."

"My mother died the other night, and went
To heaven. Lame Jim, my father, brought me
here.

It isn't a nice place; I'm 'fraid of it,
For everything's so lonely and so queer.

"But I remembered it was Caristmas-eve,
And hoped you'd find me, though I thought be-
cause.

There was no chimney you might not. But oh!
I'm glad you did, dear, Mr. Santa Claus."

Well, Captain Jim escaped—the law, I mean,
—But not a higher power; he was drowned.
And on his body near his heart, poor wretch,
The picture of his baby girl was found.

And that dear little girl went home with me,
And never was a gift more precious given;
For childless had our home been many years,
And so she seemed sent to it straight from
heaven.

God's ways are wonderful. From rankest soil
There often grows a flower so sweet and bright.
But I must go, my time is nearly up,
A merry Christmas to you, and goodnight!

(Dooley starts for door and bumps into Miss Nerversmile who enters carrying an immense bundle of old clothes wrapped up in a sheet. The bundle rolls to front of stage and all leap up.)

Miss N. Of all the awkward men I ever saw.
Why don't you look where you are going?

Baton. Ya. Vy don't you look inside ven you go outside.

Dan. I beg your pardon.

Finn. You ought to get thirty days for bumping into a lady like thot.

Dan. I am very sorry.

Miss N. It's better to be careful than sorry.
Next time be a little more careful.

Dan. I will. *(Exits.)*

Biddy. What in the world have you got in that bundle?

Baton. It looks like you was going to move.

Finn. Begorra I should say she had stolen somebody's washing.

Miss F. Guess what's in this bundle. *(Sits on bundle.)*

Tom. Peanuts.

Mary. Pop-corn.

Child. Santa Claus.

Baton. Pretzels.

(Miss N. shakes her head after each guess)

Finn. *(Advances to bundle and punches it.)*
Shure if it was a dog he would bark. If it was a pig he would squeal. If it was dinnymite it would blow up. If it was dishes they would break. It is something soft and I guess it is clothes.

Miss N. You are right, Mr. Finnegan. It is a Christmas present for the children from the Board of Associated Charities.

Finn. I told you we didn't want any charity.

Baton. By yimminy, a present of clothes ain't charity.

Finn. Phat is charity, then?

Baton. Vy charity is ven you borrow money at forty per cent und gif a mortgage on your life dot you vill pay it back before you die. I know vat charity is. I haf tried it.

Biddy. Well let's open the bundle and see what's in it.

Miss N. (*Standing over bundle.*) Wait a minute. Now we must have fair play and no advantage. Some of these clothes are better than others and we don't want to show any partiality.

Baton. Vots dot?

Finn. Phat's phat?

Baton. Vy dot partitions alley she spoke of.

Finn. That manes ivery wan for himself. No advantage.

Baton. Yah. I see. Day all grabs und get vat dey take hold of, ain't it?

Miss N. That's it exactly. I'll untie the bundle and each child reaches in and gets a garment. If you don't like what you get you may trade with some one else afterward.

Biddy. That's a fine idea. Now all form in line and march up one at a time.

(*The children form in line and advance to the bundle, each child taking a garment or a hat. The bundle should contain an assortment of queer old clothes of various styles and sizes. Coats and hats should be as grotesque as possible so that when the children have put them on they will make a merry crowd of misfits. Each child takes a hat or a coat and puts it on at once. This should be done as quickly as*

possible. *Then all form in a line across the front of the stage.)*

Baton. Vell I don't call it charity to gif away such clothing as dot. Dot's simply good riddance to bad rubbish.

Finn. *(Laughing heartily)* Begorra Oi niver saw such a lot of misfits in all my loife. We ought to have a song to celebrate with.

Mary. The children know a song I taught them yesterday. It is called "The Soldiers of Saint Nick." If you give us something to drill with we'll sing it.

Baton. *(Goes to the bundle.)* Here's an old plug hat and a long coat. I'll lead the band.

(Baton puts on old plug hat and any old uniform coat available while Finn and Biddy pass around an assortment of old brooms, fire shovels, garden tools, umbrellas and tin pans, etc.)

Baton.—*(Coming down center.)* Now! All ready. togedder. Von, two, dree! Sing!

(Children sing "Soldiers of Saint Nick" and march about stage during chorus led by Baton. The other characters stand back and beat time. The song can be secured of the publishers of the play; price 35 cents.)

(If desired to make the entertainment longer a number of songs and recitations may be introduced at this point. By having another set of children introduced, a pretty drill may be added between numbers and the program adapted to any length desired. The publishers of this play have two collections: "Help-U Christmas Collection," 40 cents; and "Little People's Christmas Book," 40 cents, containing recitations, etc, and also have a number of character songs for children at 35 cents each. Or the play may continue immediately after "The Soldiers of Saint Nick" song.)

Miss N. Well, I never thought we could have such a good time on so little money.

Baton. It was de Christmas spirit dot makes de happiness. Vy I am as happy as a fly in a jar of gooseberry jam.

Mary. I told you it was making others happy that gives the greatest pleasure.

Finn. Shure if ye all got as much fun out of it as Oi hev then it has been a great success.

Miss N. But that isn't all.

Baton. Vat? Is der more yet to come than vot already has been?

Miss N. There is. I told Miss Goodheart, the rich young lady, about our Christmas at Finnegan's Flat and she promised to come in her automobile and bring you all a treat.

Children. (*Altogether.*) Oh goody, goody. Three cheers for Miss Neversmile and Miss Goodheart.

Miss N. You must take off those terrible coats and hats for I have told Miss Goodheart what dear children you all are and I don't want to shock her by having her see you in those clothes.

(*Children take off coats and hats and put in a pile in corner.*)

Little Tom. (*Takes Miss N.'s hand.*) Will she bring me a book with pictures in it?

Biddy. Shure. She'll bring you a fine book with red elephants and yellow crocodiles in it.

Little Tom. There ain't no red elephants.

Finn. Begorra you can't fool Tom. He is a genuine naturalist. No nature faker about him.

(*Automobile horn heard outside.*)

Miss N. Here she comes now.

Baton. Hail to de new Santa Claus! De reindeer must go. De automobile has come to took his place.

Biddy. Now all look your prettiest and give three cheers for the good fairy.

Children form in line across left and right sides

of stage, leaving center open. Enter Miss Goodheart elegantly dressed in furs and accompanied by her chauffeur, wearing goggles, cap and gloves and carrying a big basket filled with boxes of candy and oranges. Children give three cheers as Miss Goodheart comes to center of stage.)

Miss G. Bless your dear little hearts. (*Looks about.*) So this is Finnegan's Flat. What a funny place.

Biddy. Shure it ain't so funny whin the rint comes due and nobody has the money to pay it with.

Miss G. At least you are warm and comfortable.

Finn. Indade we are ma'am. And we are so much better off than a whole lot of people and we are so busy congratulating ourselves that we don't hev toime to worry over phat we haven't got.

Miss G. Spoken like a true philanthropist.

Baton. Oxcuse me, but vat is dot fill-em-up-for-dis?

Miss G. A philanthropist is one who loves mankind and seeks to promote the good of others.

Baton. Yah, dots Finnegan. He lofes everybody und promotes everyding. Keep your eye on Finnegan.

Miss G. I have brought you a little Christmas present, my dears. John. (*To chauffeur.*) Pass the boxes.

(John advances to Little Tom who darts behind Mary and begins to cry.)

Mary. Why what is the matter, dear?

Tom. I'm 'fraid of him.

Miss G. Bless the child. Why John wouldn't hurt you.

Tom. He don't look a bit like my pictures of Santa Claus.

Miss G. He isn't Santa Claus, dear. We are only Santa Claus' agents.

Tom. (*cries*) I — I — want the really, truly Santa Claus.

Miss G. (*Stoops and takes Tom in her arms*). The really, truly Santa Claus won't come until after you are in bed. He is very busy tonight going to all the homes of all the good little boys and girls in all this wide, wide world. That is why he sent us here to tell you he would be late and to wish you all a merry, merry Christmas.

(*The curtain may be dropped on this picture or a Christmas chorus may be used to end with.*)

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